



## STOP A STROKE

A stroke is a sudden stop of blood supply to the brain. Sound frightening? That's because it is. In mere minutes a stroke could change your life, causing memory and cognitive loss and physical debilitation.

### 4 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW

The good news is that you can do a lot to lower your chances of having a stroke or preventing another if you've already had one. Although you can't control every factor that increases your odds (age, family history, gender) there are several key items you can keep in check to greatly reduce your chances of having a stroke:

**Know your blood pressure and cholesterol levels.** High blood pressure is a leading cause of stroke, so knowing your numbers is the first and perhaps most important step to help prevent a stroke. An optimal blood pressure is anything at or below 120/80 mm Hg. Talk and work with your doc if your blood pressure is not in this range.

High blood cholesterol also puts you at an increased risk for stroke. An ideal total cholesterol is less than 200mg/dL. Everyone over the age of 20 should have their cholesterol measured at least once every five years.

**Do everything you can to quit smoking if you smoke.** Research shows that cigarette smoking is another top risk factor for stroke. The nicotine, carbon monoxide and other chemicals in cigarettes damage your cardiovascular system, increasing the odds of stroke. Your doctor can prescribe treatments to help you quit.

**Choose monosaturated fats over the saturated kind.** Diets high in saturated and trans fats, which can be found in red meats, lard, cream and processed foods can raise blood cholesterol levels. Moderate amounts of monosaturated fats on the other hand can actually help keep your cholesterol in check and are found in vegetable oils, nuts, seeds and some fish.

**Get moving.** Something as simple as a daily brisk walk can decrease your risk. Try to get a total of at least 30 minutes of activity on most or all days.



## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Knowing the signs and symptoms of a stroke is the first step to ensuring medical help is received immediately. According to the National Stroke Association, for each minute a stroke goes untreated and blood flow to the brain continues to be blocked, a person loses about 1.9 million neurons. This could mean that a person's speech, movement, memory, and so much more can be affected. Learn as many stroke symptoms as possible so you can recognize a stroke and act fast:

- » Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- » Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or understanding
- » Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- » Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- » Sudden severe headache with no known cause

## DETECTING A SILENT STROKE

Did you know that you could have a stroke without even knowing it? These strokes are often referred to as “silent strokes”. Like a typical stroke, silent strokes cause brain damage and are caused by a loss of blood supply to the brain. However, with a silent stroke you may not have any clearly recognizable symptoms.

A brain scan performed by your doctor is the only way to determine if you've experienced a silent stroke. If you have a family history of stroke or notice that you've been experiencing unexplained memory, thinking and/or movement problems see your doctor to determine if you should be evaluated for stroke. A few silent strokes could lead to more severe strokes, so the sooner a condition is eliminated or diagnosed, the better your odds of preventing further damage.

